Date of Action

NPS Form 10-900 (Rev. 10-90)

Signature of Keeper

United States Department of the Interior National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF REGISTRATION FORM	- HISTORIC PLACES					
1. Name of Property						
Historic name <u>Trexler His</u>	toric District			<u>. </u>		
Other names/site number	Trexler Station					
2. Location						
Street & number 375-424 Old Philadelphia Pike (TR 805)			n/a not for publication			
City or town Albany Township			<u>n/a</u> vicinity			
State Pennsylvania	code PA_count	y Berks	code_011	zip code_1	<u>19529</u>	
3. State/Federal Agency C	ertification					
As the designated authority under the nomination of request for determined register of Historic Places and meets property of meets of does not meet of statewide of locally. Of See continuous control of the control of	nation of eligibility meets the o the procedural and profession the National Register Criteria.	locumentation standards fo al requirements set forth i I recommend that this pro	or registering prop n 36 CFR Part 60.	erties in the N In my opinion	ı, the	
Signature of certifying official	J VV*"		Date			
-	ec. Dîr., PA Histori	cal & Museum Commi	ssion			
State or Federal agency and burd In my opinion, the property See continuation sheet for additional	eau eets 🗆 does not meet the I					
Signature of commenting or other official			Date			
State or Federal agency and bur	eau					
4. National Park Service C	ertification					
☐ see continuation :	tional Register sheet le for the National Res sheet. ligible for the National					

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5. Classification							
Ownership of Property			Category of Property Number of Resources within Property				
(Check as	many boxes as apply)		(Check only one box)				
			g Noncontribu				
private	□ building(s)	<u> 15</u>	4	buildings			
□ public-local	☑ district			sites			
public-State	□ site			structures			
□ public-Federal	□ structure			objects			
•	□ object	15	4	Total			
Name of related multiple property listing			Number of contributing resources				
(Enter "N/A" if property is not p	part of a multiple property listing	.) previous	ly listed in th	ne National Register <u>1</u>			
6. Function or Use							
Historic Functions (Enter categories from instruction Domestic: Single Dwelling			Functions ories from instruc Dwelling	ctions)			
			nestic: Multiple Dwelling				
			sportation: Rail-related				
Agriculture/Subsistence: St	<u>orage T</u>	ransportation: R	oad-related				
Government: Post Office							
Industry/Processing: Manuf							
Transportation: Rail-related			<u> </u>				
Transportation: Road-relate	<u>. </u>						
7. Description							
Architectural Classifica	tion	Materials	3				
(Enter categories from instructions)			(Enter categories from instructions)				
Colonial:Georgian			Foundation Stone; Slate				
Late 19th & 20th Century Revivals: Colonial Revival			Walls: Log, Weatherboard Aluminum, Asbestos				
Other: Folk Victorian		<u>Shingle</u>					
Other: Pennsylvania Barn			tal; Asphalt				
		Other: Ch	<u>imney: Brick</u>				

Narrative Description (Describe the historic and current condition of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

See continuation sheets.

☐ Previously determined eligible by the National

☐ Designated a National Historic Landmark

☐ Recorded by Historic American Buildings

☐ Recorded by Historic American Engineering

Register

Survey #

Record #

Berks County PA Page 3 8. Statement of Significance **Applicable National Register Criteria** Areas of Significance (Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the (Enter categories from instructions) property for National Register listing) Architecture A Property is associated with events that have made Commerce a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history. ☐ **B** Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past. **☑C** Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a **Period of Significance** significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack c.1790-1930 individual distinction. D Property has yielded, or is likely to yield information important in prehistory or history. **Significant Dates** 1863, 1874 **Criteria Considerations** (Mark "X" in all the boxes that apply.) Significant Person (if Criterion B is marked above) Property is: N/A **a** owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes. **Cultural Affiliation b** removed from its original location. N/A \Box **c** a birthplace or a grave. □ **d** a cemetery. □ e a reconstructed building, object, or structure. Architect/Builder \Box **f** a commemorative property. Unknown ☐ **g** less than 50 years of age or achieved significance within the past 50 years. Narrative Statement of Significance (Explain the significance of the property on one or more continuation sheets.) See continuation sheet. 9. Major Bibliographical References **Bibliography** (Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form on one or more continuation sheets.) See continuation sheet. Previous documentation on file (NPS) **Primary Location of Additional Data** Preliminary determination of individual listing □ State Historic Preservation Office □ Other State agency (36 CFR 67) has been requested. Previously listed in the National Register ☐ Federal agency

☐ Local government

Name of repository: Berks County Conservancy

□ University

図 Other

10. Geographical Data

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Acreage of Property 8.0 acres	
UTM References (See continuation sheet)	
Zone Easting Northing 1	Zone Easting Northing 3 4 See continuation sheet
Verbal Boundary Description See continuation sheet.	See continuation sneet
Boundary Justification See continuation sheet.	
11. Form Prepared By	
Name/title Cyndie Fuhrer, Land and C	Cultural Resource Specialist
Organization Berks County Conservan	Date February 15, 2001
Street & number 960 Old Mill Road	Telephone 610-372-4992
City or town Wyomissing	State_PA Zip code_19610
Additional Documentation	
Map #2 - Sketch map Map #3 - 1876 Albany Township Map Photographs Representative black and white photog Additional items (Check with the SHPO or FPO for any a	re series) indicating the property's location. graphs of the property.
Property Owner	
(Complete this item at the request of the SHPC	or FPO.)
Name	
Street & number	telephone
City or town	state zip code

Paperwork Reduction Act Statement: This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C. 470 et seq.).

Estimated Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18.1 hours per response including the time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Chief, Administrative Services Division, National Park Service, P.O. Box 37127, Washington, DC 20013-7127; and the Office of Management and Budget, Paperwork Reductions Project (1024-0018), Washington, DC 20503.

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES

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Section 7 Page 1

Trexler Historic District

Berks County, PA

NARRATIVE DESCRIPTION

The Trexler Historic District was a commercial center that served the surrounding Albany Township farms from colonial times to the Great Depression. The village is located one mile south of the Berks and Lehigh County line along the east bank of the Ontelaunee Creek on a narrow floodplain emerging from the steep foothills of the Kittatiny Mountain. From here the land opens into a broad plain of cultivated fields extending south to the village of Kempton. Trees line the creek and obscure the village from the view of motorists on State Road 143 that runs along the western edge of the creek. At the southwest edge of the district is the Trexler Bridge (Resource #11), a one lane, stone, three-arch bridge completed in 1841 and listed in the National Register in 1988 (Photo 6). The Trexler Bridge crosses the Ontelaunee Creek and connects Route 143 with the township road known as Old Philly Pike. The district resources are aligned along Old Philly Pike, which runs from west to east through the district. The district contains fourteen contributing buildings built between 1790 and 1920. Four noncontributing buildings include a garage built in 1970, two storage sheds built circa 1980 and a railroad signal shed that was placed here after the period of significance. This signal shed and two railroad crossing signs are adjacent to the Wanamaker-Kempton Railroad that begins in Kempton to the south of Trexler and travels due north through the district, crossing the Old Philly Pike and then continuing north along the creek to the village of Wanamaker in Lehigh County. The contributing resources portray the vernacular adaptations of colonial and late Victorian architectural styles for homes and commercial establishments in rural Berks County.

A 1-½ story, 17' x 32' barn (Resource #9a) with a gable roof and 10' shed overhang is the first building north of the bridge on the south side of Old Philly Pike. Behind the barn is a wood frame smokehouse (Resource #9b). A few yards of lawn separate the barn and smokehouse from the main residence. The Amos Trexler house (Resource #9) is a side gabled, two-story, frame late-Victorian era home built in 1886. A 17' kitchen ell, built in 1929, extends from the rear of the core with an enclosed porch and entrance on the north face. Windows are double hung, with two over two panes. The original clapboards are covered with horizontal vinyl siding, but the wood window trim and shutters have been retained. The yard surrounding the house is landscaped with perennial gardens and lawn. To the rear of the property, lawn gives way to cultivated fields and the village of Kempton is visible to the southeast.

On the north side of the Old Philly Pike is a combination of three buildings. On the left is a one and one-half story 22'x18'log house (Resource #1a) erected circa 1800 with the original shiplap siding covered by asbestos shingles. Attached is a 10-foot wide garage with a sliding wooden door (Resource #1b). This garage connects the small home to a building (Resource #1c) that was used for laundry, butchering, and a creamery in the 1920s (Photo 1). This area is used for storage now, but a fireplace, smoke house, and milk-cooling vats remain.

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES

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Section 7 Page 2

Trexler Historic District

Berks County, PA

The front-gabled, Folk Victorian, frame building with horizontal wood siding was known as the Trexler General Store (Resource #2). The building, built in 1890, has a five-foot deep porch four feet above ground level that dominates the façade (Photo 2). The porch wraps around the east and south side of the store and has an overhang roof supported by Victorian-spindle posts. A glass transom tops the double paneled doors each with a glass panel at eye level. Symmetrically placed on either side of the doors are full length, double hung, single pane windows with louvered shutters. The store interior has the original wooden shelves and bins lining the walls. Between the porch and the road there is a manual gasoline pump in good condition despite the existence of surface rust. An attic apartment is accessed by an exterior wooden stairway added in 1981on the north face that ends at a small deck on the rear of the building. A chicken coop from the 1920s and a wooden storage shed from the 1970s are behind the store. From the street the building looks much as it did when the general store closed for business during the Great Depression.

Resource # 3, which lies approximately forty feet back from the roadbed, was built *circa* 1850 and housed a cider mill. The one story mill building has vertical board siding with no battens on a slate foundation. The gable roof is half pressed metal with new corrugated metal on the other half. The south gable end facing the road includes a hinged six-foot high door and two smaller hinged openings, one in the loft. The cider mill was one of several water-powered enterprises from the nineteenth century. The cider mill building is in fair condition and is currently used for storage.

To the north of the cider mill, but only twelve feet from the roadbed is a building known historically as the Ritter House (Resource #4). This 2 ½ story, five bay, Georgian log house is 38' x 27'as built in 1790 (Photo 3). A 20-foot stone and frame kitchen wing was added to the rear circa 1875. This two-story addition has covered porches with horizontal beaded board siding. The front of the home exposes its V-notched corner construction. The gable roof is covered with pressed metal, and the two end chimneys of brick are not original. In the nineteenth century, a general store was operated in this building and at that time a second front door was added to the right of the original, center-hall plan configuration. The building, currently used as a residence, retains many original interior and exterior features.

Opposite the Ritter House on the south side of the Wanamaker Kempton Railroad tracks is a large building that once operated as a potato and grain storage facility (Resource #8). The building is at the end of a sixty-foot driveway but only 20 feet from the tracks. This three-story frame building with gambrel roof was originally 60' across as it faced the tracks and 30' deep when constructed in 1917 (Photo 5). On the south side there remains a concrete loading dock. The building was converted to two apartments in the 1940s and a narrow, full-length enclosed porch was added to the west face. A modern three bay storage unit with overhead doors was built to the south of the facility in the 1980s (Resource 8a). Near the road, where the driveway enters the property is a railroad crossing sign from the mid-twentieth century. A matching sign with its double lights and X configuration is on the opposite corner of the intersection of the rail tracks

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Trexler Historic District

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and the road. Behind the signpost is a small frame signal shed (Resource #10) placed here in the 1970s by the Wanamaker Kempton Railroad.

Two houses and a barn on the east side of the tracks constitute the remainder of Trexler Historic District (Photo 4). Nearest the tracks is a 10 x 13 frame garage built circa 1925 with folding wood doors exhibiting windows of colored glass in a diamond grid design (Resource #5a). The Nathan Trexler house, built in 1875, is a 2-½ story, frame house four bays wide with a gable roof (Resource #5). The front porch spans the façade, but the center two bays on the first floor are now doors leading to two separate living units. The next home is similar in size and design. Scalloped trim along the roofline of 375 Old Philly Pike (Resource #6) and the Gothic-influenced, centered, gable peak over a Gothic arch window in the attic are the only features reminiscent of the original design built in 1890. Vinyl siding has covered the center two bays of the second story as well as all the original wood siding on the exterior. The original shutters have been removed and metal storm windows cover the double hung sashes, but the molding and trim remains. A modern, detached, two-car garage erected circa 1970 lies to the north at the end of a thirty-foot driveway (Resource #6a).

On the south side of Old Philly Pike, east of the railroad tracks is a Pennsylvania German stone bank barn (Resource #7) in deteriorated condition. The owners of the log house (Resource #4) built this barn in the early 1800s. It has a stone lower level and stone gable-end walls. The vertical wooden boards are without battens. The current roof is a replacement gable metal roof with three round ventilators that were probably added in the 1940s. Although the barn is in poor condition and partially hidden by brush, it contributes to the district as evidence the village began as a working farm. All the buildings east of the railroad track are in only fair condition but their history, size, and scale contribute to the overall village setting.

The Trexler Historic District is a collection of homes and barns built over the last two hundred years. The contributing resources constitute a majority of the buildings present in the district. The non-contributing resources are not readily visible from the street. The oldest building, the Ritter House, built *circa* 1790 is in very good condition today, due to sensitive restoration efforts over the past twenty years. A smaller house (Resource # 1) from the early nineteenth century was incorporated into a work shed and garage unit. The Trexler General Store and Post Office appears much as it did before the Great Depression. The rest of the homes in the district retain their original scale and design but are now covered with siding. The barns in the district contribute as historic resources but have not had exterior painting done in decades. This quiet hamlet is unchanged by the demands of heavy traffic or the need for off-street parking, so it has retained a pedestrian scale. The contributing resources, which portray the vernacular adaptations of colonial and late Victorian architectural styles for homes and commercial establishments, exhibit integrity of material, design, function and location in a setting that remains unchanged since 1930.

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Trexler Historic District

Berks County, PA

Addendum: Potential for Archaeological Resources:

The history of this village suggests the potential for archaeological resources. Local legend contends Native Americans used trails along the stream and may have had a settlement near the ford that was later used as the stagecoach crossing. There was a gristmill along the stream with a millrace that ran under the third arch of the 1841 stone bridge (Resource #11). Map 3 from 1876 shows the tannery near the same spot. When the millrace was filled in and the railroad was built circa 1874 all traces of these buildings were covered. Future studies may support further investigation.

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Trexler Historic District

Berks County, PA

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Trexler Historic District is locally significant under National Register Criteria A (Commerce) and C (Architecture) as a collection of buildings that illustrate the materials, design, and workmanship of northern Berks County homes and businesses built from the colonial period until the Great Depression. The period of significance begins in 1790 with the erection of Ritter House, a two-story log house that served as a stagecoach stop at this ford across the Ontelaunee Creek. During the nineteenth century, the auxiliary buildings built on this property became the commercial center for the neighboring farmers who traveled by horse and wagon to purchase dry goods at the general store and process their crops at the butcher shop, cider press, and creamery that operated here. In 1874, the introduction of the railroad generated an economic boom that facilitated the building of three new homes and a general store. These resources illustrate the vernacular adaptations of Late Victorian architectural design still popular at that time in this rural section of Pennsylvania. By the end of the period of significance in 1930, most of the commercial activity in Trexler Historic District's had ceased due to changes in transportation and commerce. The remaining resources appear much as they did in 1930.

VILLAGE HISTORY

Their 1733 land grant from the Penn brothers included 301 acres along the Ontelaunee Creek. After 1750, a road was built roughly parallel to the Pine Creek to the northwest and crossing the Ontelaunee Creek at Ritter's farm. This road, now known as the Old Philly Pike, forded the Ontelaunee Creek behind the Ritter house, and resulted in the use of the house as a stagecoach stop. The Old Philly Pike continued to be a busy route for travelers, and in 1841 a new stone bridge was constructed over the Ontelaunee to replace the ford. An early mill established along the Creek, combined with the stagecoach stop, made the farmstead a local center of commerce in the area.

By 1857, Joel Kistler owned the Ritter farm and opened a tannery adjacent to the mill. While the mill used the Ontelaunee Creek for power, the tannery used the creek water to clean and process hides. Both businesses were important to the local economy. The village of Trexler was founded in 1863, when Nathan Trexler purchased the Henry Kerper and Company Tannery and moved its operation to this site along the Ontelaunee. The 1876 township map (Map 3) indicates that Nathan Trexler owned the tannery and much of the surrounding area. Nathan and his younger brother Amos were partners in the tannery and mill for the next thirty years until the tannery closed in 1892. No remnant of these buildings is evident in the floodplain. Nathan lived in the log house (Resource # 4) and operated a general store in one of the front rooms. Amos and his family lived in the small frame house (Resource # 1).

The village economy boomed in 1874, when the Lehigh and Schuylkill branch of the Reading Railroad was established. Amos Trexler, who was running a business selling coal, grain, lime, feed, sand, and other agricultural and building supplies to local farmers, helped bring the railroad to Trexler. Through his efforts, the local farmers helped fund the continuation of the railroad construction through Albany Township. Amos Trexler realized the importance of this new transportation system on his business. Previously, the goods he sold were brought to Trexler by wagon. Now, they could be shipped much faster by rail car. A depot was constructed in front

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Trexler Historic District

Berks County, PA

of the Pennsylvania barn (Resource #7). The depot did not have an attendant and was primarily used for freight and mail, although local passengers did use the depot including many who worked at the rail yards in the City of Reading. This depot was destroyed in 1917, when a new grain and potato storage facility was built (Resource 8). The 1876 map of Albany Township (Map 3) shows many more businesses including a hotel (presumably the inn operating out of the log house), the railroad depot, the J.D. Trexler store and post office, and the mill/tannery complex.

Between 1874 and 1930, the Trexler family businesses prospered. Amos Trexler built a new 2½-story frame house (Resource #9) on the opposite side of the road in 1886. Nathan Trexler built a new home (Resource #5) on the north side of the railroad for his family and another (Resource #6) for tenants. By 1890, the brothers had erected the General Store building (Resource #2). Nathan and Amos operated the Washington Inn in the log house. Agriculture was becoming more specialized, and in 1917 Amos decided to build a new warehouse facility to store grain and potatoes grown by local farmers before shipment. The first floor of the building (Resource #8) was devoted to potatoes, and the second floor held different types of grain in bins. Potatoes were a big cash crop for local farmers (including the Trexlers who still owned the fields south of the village). The combined stations in Albany Township loaded as many as thirteen railroad cars of potatoes to cities across the east coast of the United States. The village of Kempton, one mile to the south, began in 1874 when the railroad company built a hotel to house rail workers. A smith shop, modern feed mill and a shirt factory later employed many families who lived within walking distance of the Kempton station.

The construction of new and improved roads---including State Route 143 to the west of the district--in the late 1920s and early 1930s contributed to the decreased use of the Old Philly Pike. At the same time, large trucks using the new roads could pick up loads of potatoes and other products directly from the farmers. The growth of the trucking industry made the storage facility in Trexler increasingly unnecessary. In 1929, Albert Trexler began a new business in the family warehouse. Al made space on the first floor to adapt manual potato seed cutters to electric. The changes he designed resulted in more efficient machines that cut more uniform pieces and that worked smoothly in mechanized planters. His first year in business he sold 250 machines to farmers across the northeastern United States. But with the bank collapse in the next year, the Trexler family lost some of their real estate holdings due to mortgage foreclosures.

Soon, Al Trexler's was the only business left in Trexler. The tannery's buildings, which had ceased operation in 1892, were demolished c.1920. Some of the lumber was used to build the addition onto the small frame house (Resource #1b). The cider mill went out of use at the turn of the twentieth century. The blacksmith and carpenter whose shops were outside the district closed their operation during the Depression. The Trexler General Store could not compete with the businesses in Kempton. When the Trexler brothers declined to initiate the new rural delivery system in the late 1930s, the post office was transferred from Trexler Store to Kempton and the Trexler General Store closed their doors permanently. The L & S railroad line was disbanded in the late 1950s and this section of the track began being used as the tourist W K & S line in 1962. A signal shed and flashing lights were added to Trexler's streetscape by the W.K.& S enterprise at that time. From 1930 the Ritter house (Resource #4) was used for storage until converted back to a single-family residence in the 1970s. The properties Al Trexler was able to buy in 1930,

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Berks County, PA

(Resources 1, 2, 8, & 9) remain in the family today, owned by his two daughters. At the turn of the twenty-first century, Trexler is a strictly residential community, with no active business in the village.

CONTEXT

During the period of significance, from 1790 to 1930, the Trexler Historic District was an important commercial center in Albany Township. Commerce in colonial times was generally conducted along the few existing roads at sites where water was available to power mills. The introduction of railroads generated commercial centers around the depots collecting surplus produce for shipment to markets far beyond the reach of horse and wagon. When trucks and cars became the dominant form of transport, the location of commercial centers shifted to prime highways. The Trexler Historic District began as a colonial-era stagecoach stop, expanded to include water-powered farm accessory businesses, and experienced a building boom when the railroad came through in 1874. However, improvements to the state highway system by-passed Trexler at the same time the economic impact of the Great Depression closed most of the village businesses. The National Register Virginville Historic District seven miles to the south has a similar history as a early trading center along the creek that experienced considerable growth when the railroad came through in the 1870s and then declined after the railroad was replaced by highways.

The Trexler Historic District exhibits the materials and design elements preferred locally across the period of significance in both residential and commercial buildings. The Trexler Bridge (Resource #11) is listed in the National Register as an example of mid-nineteenth century bridge design. The Ritter House (Resource #4) is an unusually large, two-story, log building that maintains many original exterior and interior features. The Berk Log House, two miles south, is listed in the National Register, and exhibits similar corner notching techniques but is a much smaller building. The Trexler General Store is an excellent example of a community store with intact decorative elements remaining inside and out. Equally as significant are the Late Victorian style homes that demonstrate the popularity of these design elements long after they fell out of favor elsewhere. As a collection the resources in the district are enhanced by their setting and undisturbed layout along the railroad. In Berks County, the Oley Township Historic District contains villages with a similar mix of colonial log buildings surrounded by vernacular Victorian-styled houses, but Trexler is a much smaller, cohesive village.

SUMMARY

The Trexler Historic District exhibits original materials, layout, setting and scale that convey the architectural history of a small commercial center from 1790 to 1930. The progression from single farmstead to busy commercial village is evident in the resources present in the district. The few non-contributing buildings are not visible from the road. The roadside alignment is typical of rural villages in Berks County. Trexler Historic District has an unusual collection of historic resources that continue to communicate the 200-year history of village commerce.

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Trexler Historic District

Berks County, PA

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Section 10

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Trexler Historic District

Berks County, PA

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

Beginning at the west edge of the stone arch bridge connecting Township Road 805 (Old Philly Pike) with State Route 143 the district boundary follows the east side of the Maiden Creek (also known as the Ontelaunee Creek) a distance of roughly 400 feet.

The northern boundary proceeds from the creek bed four hundred (400) feet, along the rear property lines of Property 5 and 6 to the eastern property line of Property 6.

From this point the boundary follows the property line south 130 feet to the edge of the Old Philly Pike, crosses the road, and continues approximately another 100 feet, to a point behind the barn (Resource 7).

The boundary continues west from this point through the rear of Properties 8 and 9 to the Old Philly Pike, approximately 450 feet.

Here the boundary continues across the Trexler Bridge (Resource 11) to the point of beginning.

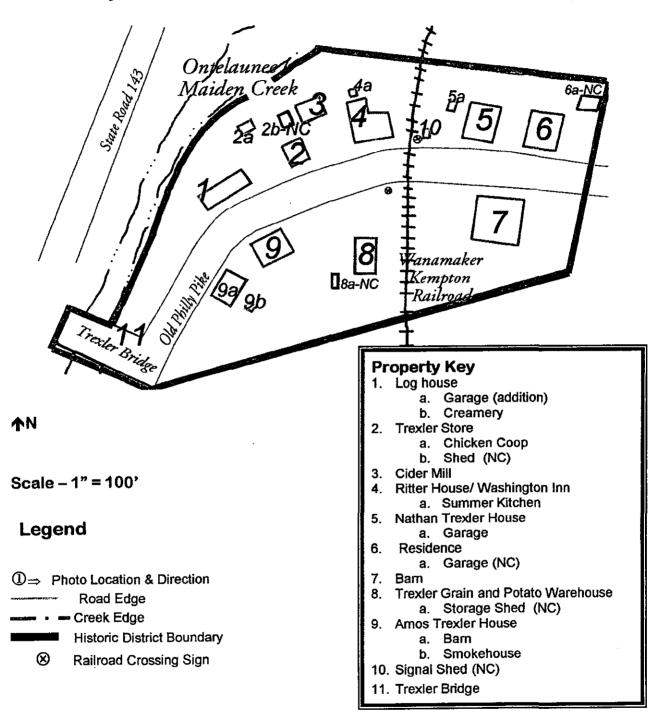
SECTION 10 BOUNDARY JUSTIFICATION

The boundaries of the proposed Trexler Historic District contain most of the village of Trexler. Excluded from the district are three houses east of Property 7, which either post-date the period of significance by several decades or have been significantly altered. Within the district, the only examples of infill construction and modern intrusions are garages and storage sheds at the rear of the properties and not located along the Old Philly Pike.

Trexler Historic District

Berks County, PA

Sketch Map Map 2



Created for the

Berks County Conservancy

February 2001

